

# *Shake Sugaree*



***TAJ MAHAL***  
*Sings and Plays for Children*

# Shake Sugaree

- 1 FISHIN' BLUES 4:29
- 2 BROWN GIRL IN THE RING 2:47
- 3 LIGHT RAIN 3:26
- 4 QUAVI, QUAVI 2:53
- 5 SHAKE SUGAREE 3:51
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- 7 TALKIN' JOHN HENRY 3:01
- 8 RAILROAD BILL 5:03
- 9 A SOULFUL TUNE 1:20
- 10 LITTLE BROWN DOG 4:17

## TAJ MAHAL

### Sings and Plays for Children

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When Music For Little People first fantasized about producing children's music that would inspire children to sing, dance and laugh, Taj Mahal immediately came to mind. His music brings children in touch with a simple kind of magic.

Using traditional tunes created long ago and sung by families for generations, Taj introduces children to different cultures and the roots of much of today's popular music.

*Quavi, Quavi* is a song sung by fruit peddlers in Gambia, West Africa. *Brown Girl in the Ring* is a touching traditional Caribbean song portraying village life through a child's eyes. Two songs included here were written by remarkable women who helped shape American folk music: **Elizabeth Cotten** wrote *Shake Sugaree*, and **Etta Baker** wrote *Railroad Bill*. Taj has chosen songs that appeal to a child's sense of imagination. *Talkin' John Henry* builds a picture bigger than life of the famous folk hero, and *Little Brown Dog* conveys a child's dream of riding around the world on the back of a special puppy. »

Taj has included some of his original tunes, including a new one called *Funky Bluesy ABC's*, a fun way to learn the alphabet. We hope you and your family enjoy it as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

American Library Association 1989 "Notable Children's Recording Award"  
N.A.I.R.D. Indie Award 1988 1st Place "Best Children's Music" Award

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Printed lyrics included.  
Also available on cassette.





## **FISHIN' BLUES**

(Thomas, Blackwood Music)

Betcha goin' fishing all the time, baby goin' fishin', too.  
Bet your life, your sweet wife  
She gonna catch more fish than you.  
Little fish bites if you got good bait,  
Here's a little tip that I would like to relate,  
Come on with my pole, baby, and my line  
I'm goin' fishin' yes, I'm goin' fishin'  
And the baby goin' fishin' too.

Went on down to my favorite fishin' hole  
Now that I got myself a pole and line.  
Gotta nine pound catfish on the bottom,  
Clean, I got 'em now.  
Took 'em home to Mama 'bout suppertime.

Sing, many fish bites if you got good bait  
Here's a little tip that I would like to relate  
Come on, honey of mine,  
I'm goin' fishin' yes, I'm goin' fishin'  
And the baby goin' fishin' too.

Baby brother just about to run me out of my mind,  
Say, "Man, can I go fishin' with you?"  
Took him on down to my favorite fishin' hole,  
What you think that brother of mine did do?  
Caught a seven pound perch on the bottom,  
Clean 'em, got 'em now,  
Took him home to Mama say he's real gone, come on,  
Honey and he is goin' fishing  
Yes, he's goin' fishin'  
And the baby goin' fishin' too.

Put 'em in the pot, baby, put em in the pan  
Mama cook 'em til they're nice and brown.  
Get yourself a batch of buttermilk and a bib  
put the sucker on the table, Mama, ya scarf 'em on down.

Singin', many fish bites if you got good bait,  
Here's a little tip that I would like to relate,  
Come on, with my pole, baby and my.....  
I'm goin' fishin', yes I'm goin' fishin'  
and the baby goin' fishin' too.

## **BROWN GIRL IN THE RING**

There's a brown girl in the ring,  
And she looks like a sugar in a plum.

Oh, headwater runs dry,  
I got no way to wash my clothes  
dang-a-dang, oh suki, dang-a dang!

I remember one Saturday night  
We had fried fish and johnny cake.

## **LIGHT RAIN**

Light rain, light rain, baby, fallin' down.  
Soon as it hit my window pane,  
It sure enough hit the ground.

I'm going to Houston,  
see my ponies run.  
I'm going down to Houston  
to see my ponies run.  
If I win some money, baby,  
sure enough bring you some.

I love you, baby, tell the world I do.  
Ain't no woman in 14 counties love me like you do.

Big, big bull frog, sitting in the pond  
got a white tie & coattails, got no britches on.

## **SHAKE SUGAREE**

Elizabeth Cotten

Have a little song, it won't take long  
Sing it right, once or twice.

Oh, Lordy me, then we'll shake sugaree,  
Everything I've got is done and pawned.

Pawned my watch, pawned my chain,  
Pawned everything, even pawned my own name.

Have a secret, I ain't gonna tell.  
I'm going to heaven and I ain't going to....

Pawned my buggy, pawned my plow.

Pawned everything, even pawned my old cow.

Have a secret I ain't gonna tell.  
I'm going to heaven in a brown pea shell.

Oh, Lordy me, then I'll shake sugaree,  
everything I got is done and pawned.

## **FUNKY BLUESY ABC's**

ABCDEFG... etc.  
Funky funky bluesy bluesy ABC's,  
Bluesy bluesy funky funky ABC's.

You got to learn it before you earn it.  
You got to try it, you can't deny it.

You got to learn it before you turn it.  
You got to want it, hey let's get on it!

"Kids, study those ABC's now, so you can read everything  
from a stop sign to the *Illiad*. That's right!" — Taj Mahal

## **TALKIN' JOHN HENRY**

This here's a "talking" John Henry. "Don't you ever take no pattern after me." That's what he said: "Don't you ever take no pattern after me." John Henry was a little bitty boy. Sat down on his daddy's knee. Daddy said, "Son, son, keep on lookin' for the Sun, and don't you ever take no pattern after me. Don't do like I did, Don't you ever take no pattern after me." Handle to the head of his hammer caught fire. Hollerin' up, "Pick 'em up, boys! Won't you lay 'em down again, cuz I want one, a drink of water before I die." Now John Henry had himself a little girl. She was fine and she was shy. She loved herself some John Henry. Make him a great big ol' apple pie, that's what that girl would do. Fried chicken. Now you know there's always been some question, well, was John Henry really that big? I'm here to tell you that the man was that big. He was six foot five, weighed two hundred and thirty-five, and in good shape.

## **A SOULFUL TUNE**

It's a soulful tune, if you sing it in key.  
Get your knees start to jumping,  
head start to shaking, back start to jumping,  
shoulders start to shaking, arms start to wiggling,  
toes start to tapping, back start to swaying.  
It's a soulful tune, it will make you dance.

It's a soulful tune, if you sing it in key.  
Get your knees start to jumping,  
head start to shaking, back start to rolling,  
shoulders start to shaking,  
arms start to wiggling, hands start to moving,  
knees start to jumping, feet start to swinging.  
It's a soulful tune, it will make you dance.

## **LITTLE BROWN DOG**

Oh, I buyed myself a little dog  
and his color it was brown.  
I threw him in a music box  
just to sail the world around.  
His legs they were fourteen yards long  
and his ears they were so broad  
Around the world in a half a day  
upon him I would ride.

Sing, tarry all day.  
Sing, autumn to May.  
Had myself a spotted horse  
and he took me everywhere.  
Fields, fountains, mountains, streams.  
Where, he did not care.  
Took me to those places  
where kings and queens do go.  
One night he even snuck into my room,  
took me down to Mexico.

Sing, tarry all day.  
Sing, autumn to May.

# TAJ MAHAL

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- |   |                        |    |                    |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------------|
| 1 | FISHIN' BLUES          | 6  | FUNKY BLUESY ABC's |
| 2 | BROWN GIRL IN THE RING | 7  | TALKIN' JOHN HENRY |
| 3 | LIGHT RAIN             | 8  | RAILROAD BILL      |
| 4 | QUAVI, QUAVI           | 9  | A SOULFUL TUNE     |
| 5 | SHAKE SUGAREE          | 10 | LITTLE BROWN DOG   |

### **Taj Mahal**

*vocals, guitar, mandolin, harmonica*

### **Ahmen & Deva Mahal**

*backup vocals*

### **PRODUCER**

Taj Mahal

### **PRODUCTION COORDINATOR**

Leib Ostrow

### **STUDIO**

MantraSound

Kapaa, Kauai, Hawaii

### **ENGINEER**

Michael Sena & Louis Rodriguez

### **COVER ARTIST**

Mohammed Reziian

*from a photo by Susan Wilson*

*This production is dedicated to  
all the children of the world.  
May they learn to sing songs  
that help bring peace and  
harmony to this planet for  
generations to come.*

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